

## **Q&A: North Georgia Clergy Serving On Loan**

North Georgia Conference clergy who would like to explore the opportunity to serve in another annual conference now have a way to formally share their interest and be connected with appropriate annual conference leaders. While clergy serving on loan isn't new, this interest form will simplify and standardize the process.

Below are some helpful questions and answers:

### **Why would a clergyperson consider serving outside the North Georgia Conference?**

Some conferences in the United States are actively seeking clergy to serve in their churches due to a shortage of clergy in their specific conference. Some clergy may have a need to serve beyond their home conference due to the transfer of a spouse's job, the need to care for family in other states, or just a desire to venture to another part of the country for a while. This opportunity to explore serving beyond the bounds of the North Georgia Conference allows us to live into our deep connectionalism.

### **How does the process work?**

The Center for Clergy Excellence has created a form through which clergy can explore opportunities without making an official commitment until the end of the process and with the full approval of the bishop, cabinet, and clergyperson. The process begins with providing information through this link: [Q & A NGa Clergy Serving On Loan](#)

After you complete the form, you will receive an automated reply that provides the conferences and contact persons with whom you can begin the conversation. The Center for Clergy Excellence will communicate to your district superintendent that you have completed the form so that you can fully consult with your district superintendent throughout the process.

Each conference will have its own process for consultation; however, they will guide you through their process in determining if they have churches that match your profile. Should a match occur, the bishops of each conference must agree to the appointment.

If you take an appointment in another conference, you are still a member of the North Georgia Conference unless you initiate the transfer process through the other conference.

### **Is there a list of conferences for me to review?**

Once the form is completed, you will receive an email listing all the conferences that need clergy and the contact information for that conference.

### **When is the transfer portal available during the year?**

The link will remain active throughout the year. The list of available conferences will be updated as other conferences communicate with us.

### **I'm interested in learning more, but not 100% certain I want to serve elsewhere yet. Do I still fill out this form?**

You should discuss your interest with your district superintendent before you fill out this form since they will receive an email confirming your interest after you complete the form.

**Can I talk with another conference before I make my decision?**

Yes. After you complete the form, you will receive a list of conferences needing clergy along with contact information. Your district superintendent will know you are interested in talking with other conferences. You should remain in contact and consultation with your district superintendent as you engage in these conversations since any cross-conference appointment must be approved by the bishop of each conference.

**At what point in the process is this final?**

The process is finalized when the bishops of each conference agree to the appointment.

**What would my clergy status be if I served in another annual conference?**

Clergy retain their clergy status as deacon or elder no matter where they serve. Those who do not officially transfer to another conference retain membership in their home conference and are accountable to their home conference. They may have voice but not vote in the conference where they are serving. Par 346 BOD

**Am I giving up my conference membership?**

No. The only way you will give up your North Georgia conference membership is if you decide to transfer to the conference in which your new appointment is located.

**Do I attend two annual conference sessions?**

Clergy remain accountable to their home conference and are expected to attend the annual conference session with full voice and vote. In the annual conference where their appointment is located, clergy have voice but no vote.

**Who would be my contact person back in North Georgia?**

Your contact persons are the Director of Clergy Excellence, the Assistant to the Bishop, as well as the district superintendent of the district in which you last served.

**When I want to return to North Georgia, how would I do that?**

If you want to return to your home conference, you must send a request in writing to the bishop and to the district superintendent in the district you last served at least six months prior to the Annual Conference session at which the appointment is to be made.

**Will this affect my years of service?**

No.

**Will this impact my future appointments?**

Should you desire to return to your home conference, your appointment will be determined by what is available and matches your profile. You will not be "punished" or returned to an entry-level appointment for serving outside your home conference.

**What if I want to stay in the conference where I have been serving on loan?**

The Book of Discipline allows for clergy to transfer conferences. (Par 347 BOD)

**Is there a time limit to how long I can serve on loan?**

There is no time limit.

**Who will cover my moving expenses?**

Each annual conference has its own policies for moving expenses. For instance, the North Georgia Conference pays moving expenses from the state line. For instance, someone moving from Tennessee would be compensated from the state line between Tennessee and their new home in Georgia. The same with Alabama, etc. Someone moving from Texas would be compensated from the western state line of Georgia. This is a question clergy will want to ask the receiving conference.

**I am a local pastor, is this option available to me?**

Local Pastor licenses are given only within the bounds of an annual conference. One seeking to serve as a licensed Local Pastor must initiate a new relationship with another annual conference. (Par 316.3 BOD.) However, local pastors are welcome to complete the form to express their interest in serving beyond the North Georgia Conference.

**I am a provisional member. Can I serve outside of North Georgia? What would it mean for my ordination process?**

Provisional deacons and elders may serve outside of North Georgia. Your ordination process would continue in your home conference (NGUMC) unless you initiate a transfer.